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ABSTRACT

This book examines ways to meet the educational needs of families. The volume is divided into three parts. Part 1 draws together the opinions and aspirations of parents and the general public on issues ranging from curriculum to classroom violence. Using the goals presented in part 1, part 2 reveals which approaches to schooling have been successful and which strategies have been failures. It provides examples of school systems from 500 B.C. to the late 20th century and answers numerous questions covering the way schools have worked: How was the curriculum set? How quickly did it change to meet the changing demands of families? Who chose the teachers? and How much autonomy were teachers given? For each approach, the successes and failures that resulted are explored with an emphasis on what students learned and how well they were able to apply that learning. The last section, "What Works," distills the ingredients of effective schools identified in part 2 and shows why some school systems have enjoyed continuous innovation and improvement, while others have stagnated or declined. Popular school-reform proposals are closely examined in this section. The last chapter presents a plan for applying the lessons of history and current research to the task of education. (RJM)

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